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THE
CHARITIES OF LONDON,
AND SOME
ERRORS OF THEIR ADMINISTRATION:
WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR
AN IMPROVED SYSTEM
OF
PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL CHARITABLE RELIEF.

*(Read at a Meeting of the Association for the Prevention of Pauperism
and Crime in the Metropolis, in the Rooms of the Society of Arts,
December 17th, 1868: The Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., in the Chair.)*

BY
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WORKING CLASSES," ETC., ETC.

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* * The Council of the Association, without pledging themselves to an exact agreement with every position stated in the following Paper, believe that it brings forward facts and remedial measures of the greatest importance, and deserving the earnest consideration of every one interested in the Prevention of Metropolitan Poverty and Crime.

THE CHARITIES OF LONDON.

ABOUT the end of last June, the Rev. H. Solly read a paper at the Society of Arts, entitled "How to deal with the Unemployed Poor of London, and with its Roughs and Criminal Classes." The subject excited great interest. It seemed as if the public mind had been long brooding over the weighty questions then discussed, and that the moment had arrived for a general impulse to pass from deliberation to action. The first result was the formation of a committee of inquiry, which divided itself into various sections in order to facilitate and systematize the work. Every member of that committee did his best, and as soon as it was thought that the chaos of material brought into view was sufficiently ordered, and the atmosphere of its intelligence clear enough to see ahead and determine the path to be pursued, the committee merged into the present Association. Those who know the immensity and difficulty concerned in attempting to deal with questions of pauperism and crime, may well feel doubtful of any committee or association being useful. Many will think its members guilty of temerity, if not of presumption, in making the effort. To this it may be replied, that the members of this Association are fully sensible of the great difficulties in their way, and would take a diffident and humble view of their abilities and expectations in respect of them; nevertheless, they feel the courage of desperation when they view the fearful aspect and the increasing magnitude of those evils, and the awful responsibilities of society in relation to them, while the character and motive of their labours supply to them the faith and hope of that Divine help, which shall if necessary remove mountains.

In the division of labour referred to, it fell to the Author's lot to take a general survey of the means now in operation to oppose pauperism, and during an autumn holiday he was enabled to expend considerable time on the subject. The facts then made out were generously thought by the writer's colleagues sufficiently important to make them a basis for discussion.

EXPENDITURE OF CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

i. The first question that arose was the amount of money expended by the various metropolitan charities in the work of administering to the want and destitution of London. Fry's

"London Charities" * was selected as a handy and good catalogue of the same, and sums total were made of the number of charities, the annual receipts, and the number of persons said to be benefited.

The following are the results :—The whole number of charities registered was found to be 989, of which 619 give the amount of their annual income, and the gross total of the annual income of these amounts to £3,857,109. But in looking through the list several institutions are found whose sphere of operation is not London, or only partly in London. As, for example, the missionary societies, and the grant for education from the Privy Council: excluding all these entirely, we have to subtract from the gross total above named the sum of £1,259,089, leaving a residue for employment in London of £2,607,020.

The next question was the value to be attached to the 370 charities, the incomes of which are not recorded. If calculated at the same ratio as the first, they would produce a sum equal to £1,420,243.

A third question was the kind of charity, or what direction of benevolent work these vast sums were committed to.

To get a rough notion of this, three heads of benevolent relief were laid down, and the whole catalogue distributed between them thus :—

(a.) Charities for the relief of diseases (bodily and mental).—

The gross number of these is 173. The number giving their incomes is 134, and the sum total of the latter is £503,198. The 38 without incomes recorded, if estimated at the same ratio as the first, would produce £127,677.†

(b.) Charities intended for the relief of the ordinary necessities of life, in food, dwelling, shelter, clothing, firing, &c.—The number of charities under this head is 577, of which 326 give their incomes, and they amount to £948,048. The incomes are not recorded in 256 instances, and if calculated as before they would amount to £722,000.

(c.) Charities intended for educational, moral, and religious purposes.—The number here is 239, of which the annual

* The Royal Guide to the London Charities, for 1867-8. By Herbert Fry. Robert Hardwicke, 112, Piccadilly.

† Dr. Fleetwood Buckle says, speaking of 1863, "In London alone 1,018,940 patients were treated in the (hospitals and medical institutions), 41,567 as in-patients and 977,343 as out-patients. The proportion to population was of in-patients 1 to 67.43, of out-patients 1 to 2.86, together 1 to 2.75." Dr. Fleetwood Buckle sets down the cost of in-patients as averaging £215s. a head, and of out-patients as 2s. 6d. a head. But from the complete list of Fry's "Royal Guide to the London Charities," the cost must be double this; for, as we see in 1867 (four years later than Dr. Fleetwood Buckle's estimate) the whole number of patients reported is 1,082,610, or 64,000 more than in 1863; but the total incomes of these charities in London alone is considerably over half a million, giving an average cost per head of total of 9s. 3½d.; or 49,209 in-patients, at nearly £5 a head, and 1,033,410 at 5s. a head. The difference is probably due to the fact that Dr. Fleetwood Buckle does not include the great number of dispensaries and other medical and surgical institutions at work.

incomes are recorded in 161 instances, and their amount is £1,170,391. The 78 without incomes given would at the same ratio produce £570,366.

Thus, after removing from the computation the charities which are not intended for London, we get a residue of over four millions sterling, supposed to be spent in the work of relieving the wants of the houseless, the foodless, the unclothed, the sick and suffering, or the uneducated and untrained. It must be admitted that the estimate is a rough one, and is to be received more as an approximation than as an accurate return. Considering, however, that Fry's catalogue is by no means complete, that, in fact, many more charities exist than are herein recorded, that the compilation was made from returns of two years ago, since which time vast additions have been made to the number and amount of our charities, as, for example, Mr. Peabody's last gift of £100,000, and the immense collections for the relief of East End distress—considering these facts, the probabilities are that the result arrived at is considerably *under* rather than *over* the mark.

In Mr. Sampson Low's excellent work on the "Charities of London," we find that in 1861 he made a summary of the incomes of 640 of these institutions, and at that date the aggregate income was £2,441,967.

He also tells us that in the ten years from 1851-61 the charities had increased 1-4th in number, and 1-3rd in their entire amount of income. Seven years have passed since that summary was made, and if the progress had pursued only the same rate of increase, the institutions would be now 800, and the incomes over three millions, or £3,011,753. But there can be no doubt that the rate of increase has been considerably more during the last seven years than before that time, and this would easily bring up the number and amount to the results now presented.

2. In any estimate of what means are directed to the same ends we must include the benefactions of the charitable and the religious, given through the clergy, the offertory, and the communion. What the amount is baffles computation, but it must be very considerable, knowing as we do the powerful influence that religious appeals very properly have, and the regularity and constancy of their recurrence. It is probable that a community of three and a quarter millions of people, so rich as Londoners and with so little time to think of their own personal duties in visiting the sick and destitute, commit not less than a million a year to the ministers of religion for this purpose; for if we suppose that half the population only are adults, that 200,000 are paupers, and 500,000 more are too poor to give, yet a million of adults are still left who, one with another, at the offertory, the communion, and at other times may give 20s. a year for the purposes referred to, which is about 4½d. a week.

3. We must also take into consideration the money given by the compassionate, the weak-minded, and the thoughtless, to street beggars and to private appeals. This cannot average less than

5s. a year, that is, five farthings a week for one million of people, or less than a third of the London population. It is probably far in excess of this; and if we include under this head the old clothes, the scraps of food, and other personal gifts to the poor, we may safely double the sum, and put down under this head half a million a year, that is 2½d. a week for one million of the inhabitants.

4. We must include the sums given by the charitable through the instrumentality of the Mendicity Society.

5. The magistrates distribute some thousands a year, through the benefactions of benevolent people for the immediate relief of the distressing cases that often come before them. It is said that about £9,600 per annum are thus distributed, or about an average of £800 a year at each of twelve police courts.

6. The charities proper to the City, to Westminster, Mile End, and Hackney, of which the full particulars are to be found in the 47 volumes folio of the Charity Commission. Many of these charities are included in Fry's catalogue, but it is believed that they constitute a small proportion to those not so included.

7. We come to the amount expended by parochial bodies through the poor rates, and additionally this year through the Common fund. For the first the amount of expenditure in the metropolis is about £1,200,000 per annum; and for the latter, as we now learn by the levy for the first half-year, is likely to be considerably over another quarter of a million per annum. This expenditure is for new infirmaries chiefly, and for parochial industrial schools. Together these two rates will exceed a million and a half per annum.

8. We must include the State expenditure—

a. For education under the Privy Council Grant, which for London must exceed £100,000 per annum.

b. That portion of the expenditure for the repression and punishment of the crime which fairly may be put down to want of the moral and industrial training to which every child has a right either from his parents or, in their default, from society. What proportion of crime has this origin it is impossible to say, but there can be no doubt that very much of it has—and certainly no parent, and no society in cases where the parent is incapable, can be held free from the guilt of any individual's criminality, where this provision against crime has been neglected. If we suppose that only 1 in 5 of criminals have had their wretched position assigned to them in consequence of the want of early education and training, we may say that the State expenditure on them is equal to £80,000 per annum at least; but this is probably far below the reality.

Let us now present these calculations in one view thus :—

| | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. The London public charities | £ 4,079,262 |
| 2. The benefactions of the charitable and religious through the Clergy, at the rate of 4½d. a week for 1,000,000 of the population | 1,000,000 |
| 3. The alms to beggars, and assistance to private petitioners in money, clothes, food, &c., at 2½d. a week for 1,000,000 persons | 500,000 |
| 4. The benefactions of the charitable conveyed through the Mendicity Society | ? ? |
| 5. The Police Courts | 9,600 |
| 6. The City, Westminster, Mile End, and Hackney, local charities | ? ? |
| 7. The Parochial Poor-rate and the Common Fund | 1,500,000 |
| 8. The State expenditure for poverty :— | |
| <i>a.</i> The Privy Council Grant for education | 100,000 |
| <i>b.</i> The crime due to want of education and training | 80,000 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £7,368,862 |
| | <hr/> |

These figures which have been estimated with a view to presenting them as rather under than over the reality, and without including the value of the City charities not recorded in Fry's catalogue, also leaving out the money given away through the instrumentality of the Mendicity Society, also the East End Funds, the last gift of Mr. Peabody, and all the new charities within the last two years—these figures alone exhibit the fact that at least £7,000,000 a year are employed in dealing with the requirements of London poverty and pauperism. It results that if 1-8th of the whole metropolitan population—that is 400,000 persons—were entirely dependent on the other 7-8ths, the sum named would supply to each £17 a head per annum for every man, woman and child, or to every family of five persons £85 per annum, and leave £50,000 to pay the expenses of collection and distribution.

Notwithstanding this great expenditure, pauperism and crime are advancing far beyond the relative increase of population.

Surely there ought not to be a case of real want or destitution among us. But what are the facts? During the last ten years 1858-68, the population of London has increased 1-6th, but the pauper part of it has increased 5-10ths, or half. To learn what the true ratio of increase is between population and pauperism application was made to the office of the Registrar-General for a guide to ascertain the annual rate of increase of the population in London, and the information kindly returned will be found in the

foot-note.* According to the rule given, the rate of increase of population—

In 1858 was 1'66 per cent.

In 1868 it is 1'41 per cent.

The ratio of pauperism to population—

In 1858 was 2'90 per cent.

In 1868 it is 5'09 per cent.

So that, while the rate of increase of population per cent. has decreased '25, that of pauperism has increased by 2'19 per cent.

Dr. Stallard has kindly furnished the author with the following statistics of London pauperism :—

THE NUMBER OF PAUPERS RELIEVED ON THE 1ST JANUARY.

| — | In-door. | Out-door. | Total. | Expense. |
|------|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1858 | 21,956 | 55,704 | 77,660 | £ 862,261 |
| 1863 | 31,354 | 75,169 | 106,521 | 868,197 |
| 1868 | 38,173 | 125,367 | 163,179 | 1,175,362 |

Multiply the number for a day by $2\frac{1}{2}$, and the result will be the numbers relieved for half a year.

Examples:—

HOLBORN UNION—Population, 45,678.

| — | In-door. | Out-door. | Total. | Vagrants. |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Half-year, Lady-day, 1857 . | 1,424 | 4,789 | 6,041 | 5,717 |
| 1st January, 1867 . . . | 747 | 1,351 | 2,135 | — |

* FROM THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

Annual Rate of Increase of Population of London.

| | | |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| 1851-2 | | 1'83 per cent. |
| 1856-7 | | 1'71 „ |
| 1861-2 | | 1'59 „ |
| 1866-7 | | 1'46 „ |
| 1867-8 | | 1'44 „ |
| 1868-9 | | 1'41 „ |
| 1869-70 | | 1'39 „ |
| 1870-71 | | 1'36 „ |

N.B.—These rates are calculated on the ascertained increase observed between the three census periods 1841, 1851, 1861, and show that the ratio of increase of population is a decreasing ratio at an almost uniform rate.

POPLAR—Population, 44,256.

| — | In-door. | Out-door. | Total. | Vagrants. |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Half-year, 1868 | 1,086 | 6,906 | 7,695 | 8,124 |
| 1st January, 1868 | 601 | 2,429 | 3,067 | — |

He says that in the Holborn Union in 1857 the proportion of paupers to population was as 1 to 7·5 ; it is now as 1 to 5·7.

From the Rev. H. Solly's statistics I find, as to criminals, the number of depredators, offenders, and suspected persons at large in the metropolis, including *only those known* to the police during the year 1867, amounted to 8,964, while in 1868 they have increased to 10,342. In consequence of the discontinuance of transportation 2,000 convicts are now annually turned loose on the community from our convict establishments, in addition to over 100,000 criminals of all sorts from our gaols. No wonder that the public prints teem with protests against the insecurity of life and property, and that the police have found it necessary to circulate printed warnings to householders against the attempts of burglars.

Moreover, and this probably is the most important point of all, it is estimated that at least 100,000 children are in London destitute of proper guardianship, and exposed, for the most part, to the training of beggars and thieves.

Such in rapid outline are some of the sad facts relating to the dark side of our social life, and it is doubtful if out of the Kingdom of Dahomey a parallel to it can be found. The worst feature among them, that over 100,000 children are always on the road to sacrifice—marching as surely and systematically to sacrifice as any that the ancients gave up to Moloch ;—this one spectacle would be enough to disgrace any nation or people in any part of the world ; but in England, the centre of civilization, the stronghold of Christianity and of human progress, how terribly humiliating ! History records man's material work and progress for a hundred periods of time, measured each by sixty years ; for ninety-nine of these periods his material labours have been confined to dealings with the tangible, the visible, and the ponderable in nature ; now, within the last or hundredth of those periods, he has received control over the imponderable and invisible forces of nature—heat, light, and electricity—and at once he moves and carries like a Titan ten times faster, longer, and stronger than his predecessors ; he looks through space with the quick intelligence of a spirit, and communicates his will through continents and oceans, triumphant over time and distance. With this accession of power riches have multiplied indefinitely, and knowledge has spread like a quick advancing fire ; remunerative employments for the people have multiplied a hundred-

fold ; and if only our Christianity had, during that time, kept pace with this advance, and our social administrations been conducted with the wisdom becoming such a period of enlightenment, we might now be rejoicing in the fact that our pauperism had been swept away, and that individuals and society were employing effective weapons wherewith to oppose the spread of sin and sorrow in our midst. The failure is, no doubt, more due to mistake and oversight than to neglect. But the results of that failure are now too appalling to permit any Christian, philanthropist, or patriot to look on as if it did not concern him. How shall we explain the failure? Is our method a dangerous mistake and does it multiply paupers—or is our machinery corrupt?

After long and thoughtful consideration of the subject the two following explanations appear chiefly to solve the problem. They may be described under two heads—1. that of erroneous method, and 2. that of want of organization.

ERRONEOUS METHOD.

By a remarkable coincidence characteristic of the infirmity and inconsistency of human foresight and management, at the very time when our material powers were undergoing so wonderful an expansion, and the means of an easy and prosperous subsistence for the people were so near at hand—at that very moment two pieces of social administration demanded the attention of our legislators with a view to the adoption of improved and enlarged methods of management ; in each case the possibility existed, by the employment of one kind of method, of making the social administrations referred to self-supporting, and productive of valuable material and moral benefits to the country, and by another kind of method to make each of these social administrations heavy burdens to the public purse, continual and increasing sources of private and public loss and degradation, a disgrace and reproach to the whole civilized world, and an object of the highest responsibility before God.

Curiously, the error of method adopted in both of these social administrations at the time referred to, took precisely the same direction—they both discarded care of the small beginnings of difficulty ; they both allowed these to pursue their unchecked course of degradation from the possible good and useful to the hopelessly bad and dangerous ; and when the latter had multiplied and ripened into completion, the systems referred to brought their machinery to relieve the sufferers and palliate the evil, much like firemen, who might wait until the little spot of fire had spread into a destructive conflagration before applying the means to extinguish it :—*hinc illæ lacrymæ*.

The first of these mal-administrations was the adoption of the new Poor Law, which in spirit sought to deal with destitution only in its completed state—it did not attempt the prevention of pauperism by seeing that the children of the dependent, or the idle,

or the vicious were trained for industry and virtue—it did not entertain the question of individual merit or demerit, but it adopted a uniform system of relief, which was to be so ingeniously balanced that, on the one hand, its recipients might be prevented dying of starvation or want of shelter, but on the other hand that the kind and mode of the relief should be so hard, painful, and humiliating that none but the very helpless and hard-pressed should seek it. The system was to be a test, and the idea was that if you could drive away poverty out of your sight you would cure it, as if the charnel-house could be changed by screening it with a whited sepulchre. The system did not contemplate “visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction,” but it set itself up in the broad way of misery and destitution, and to every applicant as a rule, it refused the recognition of any domestic ties ; it treated with contempt the humanizing influences of hearth and home, and with stern voice pointing the way to the dreary portal of “the house,” it said “Enter, or depart without aid.” The result has been the creation of an abject, miserable race, who now feel it to be no humiliation to be dependent, or to call the workhouse “home,” to bow their head reverentially (using Dr. Richardson’s expression) to the workhouse deity in return for their can of gruel, and when possessed of more cunning and spirit, to pass from the beggar stage of degradation to that of the thief or the desperate criminal. The poor children of the lower classes are left under this system either without interference, to receive the bad and destructive training of the surroundings of their birth, or if taken into the house, the effort will not be to make them healthy, useful, and virtuous members of the community, but just to fulfil the requirement, that they shall not die, and be very servile to their workhouse superiors,—illustrating the picture so graphically given by Dr. Richardson, who says “they neither laugh like other children, nor move like them ; when they laugh they tremble, when they run they shuffle, and when they come in obedience to a call they cringe ; every element of a true, manly, and womanly nature is scrupulously kept down, and the institution which gains greatest favour is that which makes the young child most animal and most submissive.”

Our forefathers in 1600 had infinitely more Christian and wiser views than these. In a valuable paper of Dr. Stallard’s, on “The Relation between Health and Wages,” read in the Society of Arts, and published in their Journal of December 6th, 1867, is found this extract :—

“In the 18th Eliz., cap. 3, it was thus enacted in the recital :

“‘To the intent that youth may be brought up in labour and in work, and then not grow up to be like rogues ; and to the intent also that such as are already grown up in idleness, and so are rogues at present, may not have any just excuse in saying that they cannot get any service or work ; and that other poor and needy persons, being willing to work, may be set on work, be it enacted,’” &c.

The Act in the 14th of Elizabeth is entitled :—

“An Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds, and for the relief of the poor and impotent.”

Under both Acts the magistrates were ordered, with the assistance of the overseers,—

“To make diligent search and inquiry for all aged, poor, impotent, and decayed persons, and to relieve them according to their good discretion, *each poor person to be set on work* according to his ability, and relieved, some with more, some with less, each according to his need.”

Here we find the idea of a Poor Law which would not disgrace the nineteenth century ; and if this law in its spirit and intention were only properly worked, and all the children of dependent or vicious persons were brought up in industrial schools to make good and useful men and women, we should be stopping the supply of pauperism and crime at its source, and be rapidly diminishing the evils that now are pressing around us. It is true that as regards the workhouse children in London, this is already partially, though too expensively and cumbrously done ; but the great mass of neglected childhood in our courts and purlieus, estimated at over 100,000 in number, are left to reinforce the clamorous crowd of the dependent, and the vicious ranks of the depredators on society.

Instead of improving the dwellings of the working classes, and organizing visiting staffs in every district of really Christian people, to make themselves acquainted with the poor of their district—to discriminate between their claims, and to carry to the improved homes the help necessary for their suffering inmates—instead of this detailed and systematic labour of love we more and more adopt a wholesale system of doing our humanity by proxy, employing paid agents to deal with want and suffering by the hundred, by the gross in every sense, as if men were sheep and might be driven in herds to be washed or to be fed, but not to be elevated or redeemed ; we multiply our workhouses, our infirmaries, our prisons, our officials, our police, and more and more heavily tax the industrious and struggling citizen to support this great cumbrous system of relief and repression. But how much are we doing for the *prevention* of pauperism and crime ? How much of the millions spent in the relief and palliation of poverty and destitution goes to the plucking the poor children of the lowest classes from the fire, and training them in industrial schools for useful men and women ? A list of thirty such preventive institutions for London has been made out, and their united incomes are within £60,000 per annum ! or about 1-116th part of the £7,000,000 expended.

The second of the two errors of administration referred to, does not properly belong to the subject of this paper, and it is introduced only to mark its connection with, and likeness to the first. It is that great error of management which committed the nourishment

of plants—the source of the people's food—to the water-courses ; an error which has brought on us the curse of impure air and water, with all its train of evils, much of the grim death-roll of preventible disease, with the physical and mental weakness which, to so large an extent, cripples the exertions of the labouring population, and throws them upon the rates ; also the scarcity and dearth of the first necessities of life, caused by the wicked waste of the fields' fertility, and the expense of purchasing back from foreign sources the very material we have so prodigally and disastrously thrown away. Here, again, the foundation of the error consisted in disregarding the small beginnings of things, which according to their mode of management or administration, are replete with goodness or evil, with profit or loss. This subject is fully discussed in an essay by the author, published in 1866, entitled, "Matter—its Ministry to Life."*

A third error of administration exists, undeniably, in the facilities for, and the widespread temptations to, drunkenness. We carefully hedge in the sale of poisons ; but alcohol, which is as deadly a poison as any, is allowed to be retailed practically to an unlimited extent, and more—for the multiplication of spirit and beer shops beyond the requirements of a temperate community, places so many more snares and pitfalls in the pathway of the weak and irresolute. And when we think of the condition of the poor and of the working classes, housed for the most part in pig-styes because there are for them no decent dwellings within the limit of their earnings to pay for,—sleeping and working amid bad air, nourished by dear and adulterated food, and exposed to damp, darkness, and overcrowding—can we wonder that the gin-palace, with its warmth, its light, and rude merriment, is to such men and women a temptation too strong to withstand, and that to the earnings of labour it proves a bottomless quicksand ? May not the end be predicted of such beginnings—the impoverished home, the besotted mind, the paralyzed moral sense, and the consequent failure of all appeals to duty or religion ?

WANT OF ORGANIZATION.

Let us now very briefly consider the second head under which we have attempted to explain the failure of our enormous means and appliances to deal successfully with the great social evil of pauperism. The first head of explanation was "*mistaken method* ;" the second is that of "*want of organization, or the absence of any system in the administration of the charities of London*." The benevolent try to supplement the failure of our Poor Law system by a most abundant supply of money to the many hundreds of institutions that profess to fulfil their sacred trusts ; and it would seem, while the stream of generosity flows fuller and deeper every year, and the institutions for distributing it multiply proportionably, that the end

* Published by John Churchill & Sons, New Burlington Street.

is not only as far off as ever, but in fact farther, for every year the crowd of the dépendent grows larger, and the spectacle of want and misery more shocking. Why is this? Experience has shown over and over again that we have an army of professional beggars who make a trade of counterfeiting want, and deceiving not only charitable persons, but charitable institutions—often several at the same time. These degraded men and women drag up vast numbers of poor children to the same kind of life, and unfit them for industrious and respectable callings. No doubt a large portion of the means intended for the rescue of the real sufferer is thus pillaged.

Again, the aid to be afforded by charitable institutions often fails to reach the persons most in need of it, because these persons are generally so poor, ignorant, and helpless that they do not know how to proceed, or where to find the charity suitable for their case; or, having found it, they cannot obtain the letter of introduction to it; or sometimes, when their intelligence and their efforts have proceeded thus far, the institution is full and cannot receive them; or, as in the case of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, the stronger rush by, while he despairingly waits for the help to lift him in.

Sometimes these institutions are badly managed—they fritter away the means intrusted to them in expenses of management, or in ill-directed efforts—sometimes their balance sheets are obscure or are not regularly published.

REMEDIAL SUGGESTIONS.

Reviewing these various causes of failure, the following practical suggestions are submitted to remedy them:—

1st. That our Poor Law needs a modification of system, the principal features of which are—

- (a) A more discriminating treatment of adults, in which the aged and infirm may receive a sufficient support in their own homes. The sick also, except in the cases adjudged by the Medical Officer to be better managed in the infirmary, and in infectious cases. Also if the Medical Officer suspected malingering.
- (b) A change in which the able-bodied should be distinguished as not only of the suitable age for work, but also *in the health to work*; and then, without hesitation in every case to be set on labour that shall repay the parish for his or her maintenance, and for the purpose of which suitable work should always be kept on hand, with regulations sufficiently stringent to make it remunerative to the parish.
- (c) A law in which all children in the parish found without proper guardianship, religious and industrial training, shall be apprehended and sent into

industrial schools; the defaulting parents, if they can be found, to be compelled to pay something for their support in those schools. These schools to be made as far as possible self-supporting, by apprenticing the children to them for a sufficient time to make their labour profitable, or by employing a portion of their time at the suitable age in factories or other large centres of child labour, and carefully guarding them according to the provisions of the law for half-time schools.

Under such a system the objections to a uniform metropolitan rating would be removed, because throughout the metropolis the door to relief would be the same, and it would be impossible for the ratepayers of one union to find fault with the expenditure of another. Under these circumstances it would be only an act of common justice on the part of the less pauperised unions to pay an equal rate to that of the more heavily pauperised.

2nd. The successful administration of the various metropolitan charities in conjunction with the Poor Law relief might be thus effected :—

- (a.) By the union of all the charities, including the parochial, in a common understanding and obligation to attend only to applications authorised by an Office of Registration and Inquiry placed in every parish or district.
- (b.) Each office to be in communication with the others, and all to be subject to a *Central* one, which latter would act as an office not only of general control, but also for the general audit of charity accounts, and for inspection of the annual reports of the same. The district offices, on the other hand, would be constantly open to the application of all distressed or sick poor: the officer in charge would enter the particulars of the applicant and his requirements in such a way as would identify the individual, and be evidence of truth or falsity of statement. He would then, or subsequently, either personally or by the agency of a district visitor, go and verify the statement; and he would, at the time of application, if necessary, supply to the applicant a card directing him or her to the most appropriate charity or institution for the requisite relief, the card so given being the necessary but all-sufficient requirement by the charity or institution to which it was directed. In some instances it would be

possible, when the inspector found that the applicant was not altogether destitute, to write on the card, "The bearer can pay something towards the expenses of the charity;" and this would be as useful to the applicant as to the institution, for everything that favours independence tends to diminish the mean and unmanly spirit of unnecessary dependency.

Such a machinery of a central and of district offices would constitute in effect a "police of charity." It would require for its effectual working a large staff of voluntary or unpaid district visitors, who would be elected for their fitness, and act under the direction and government of systematic rules of conduct and management.

The district officer would teach them their duties, and be responsible for their conduct, keeping a record, to be carefully and daily filled up, in which the particulars of every applicant would be "ledgered up," and which would serve as a book of reference by other officers or by the public at all times, so that when any one applied to private persons for relief the latter could directly ascertain what had already been done in his or her behalf.*

If it were objected that such a system of charity police would be very expensive, it was easy to suggest how that could be met. Let each charity pay £1 per cent. of their annual income to a common fund for this purpose, and on only £4,000,000 of these incomes, £40,000 per annum would be immediately produced. There are thirty-six unions in the metropolitan area: suppose an average of five district offices to each union, and the expense of each office equalled £200 a-year, the cost of the 180 offices would then be £36,000 per annum, leaving £4,000 per annum for the central office. It might be found that fewer offices would do, but, if not, the work performed by them would be of the highest public utility. We should then obtain a public and independent audit of all charitable accounts and reports, which would strengthen the position of the good and deserving charities, and either reform or annihilate the bad ones.

Mr. G. M. Hicks, in a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* of March 14, 1868, suggests such an audit and goes fully into its duties. Also Dr. Fleetwood Buckle† says, "The wide variation in the average cost of patients, or, in other words, in the utilization of the funds, would point to a great necessity for a general inspector, appointed by Government or some central body, to act as a check upon the local committees, and to endeavour, by annual comparisons with other institutions similarly situated, to economize or obtain the greatest good out of the least possible expenditure of money, or, at

* Some such system as the one herein indicated has been adopted with great success in Edinburgh, Elberfeldt in Germany, and other places—*Vide* the admirable "Report of the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Edinburgh," drawn up by Dr. Alexander Wood. Hamilton, Adams, & Co.

† "Vital and Economical Statistics of the Hospitals, Infirmarys, &c., in England and Wales, 1863." John Churchill & Son.

all events, to secure a proper and uniform set of records being kept in each charity." He says in support of this view that in the case of the Lynn Hospital, the average costs were reduced in one year 50 per cent.

This agency would supply the poor with an easy, sure, and expeditious method of obtaining succour for the destitute and the real sufferer, for the offices would possess the power of opening the door at once to the most suitable help at all hours of the day or night.

We should be able to prevent entirely the trade of begging by identifying any dependent person, and obliging him to keep to his own district for relief, the correspondence of the offices making it impossible for the same person to obtain a ticket of relief from two offices, aided, as the offices would be, by the weekly reports of the different charities, and also by the reports of the district visitors. Once this system in complete action, and the law might mercifully sweep every beggar from the streets.

The machinery thus sketched out would subserve other useful purposes. Each of these district offices might constitute a centre of parochial usefulness to which Mr. Solly's notions of working men's clubs might be affiliated; or in other cases the head-quarters might be allied to them of those organizations of frank pledge, of registration, and of friendly supervision, which were devised to favour the honourable industry of the reformed criminal.

Moreover, since writing this paper, the author has seen Dr. Stallard's interesting book on "London Pauperism,"* and in his last chapter is a scheme proposed for the more effectual working of the Poor Law. The plan seems sound and good in principle, and might very well combine the requirements of the "Police of Charity." On the other hand the latter scheme could as easily combine his objects, and with great advantages both in efficiency and economy. Abolishing the present offices of "Relieving Officers," and leaving their work to be done by the "District Officers," the expense of the former would then be saved to the tax-payer, and the work would be infinitely better done, because the district officer would have his district visitors of ladies and gentlemen to keep him up to the mark of his humanity and attention to the poor, and he would have his chief to hold him to his official duties. The relieving officer has but few and unimportant witnesses to the way in which he fulfils his duties.

Dr. Stallard says, "Is it not a crime to leave the poor to the tender mercies of relieving officers, or to neglect the sick in the workhouse hospitals? And yet none of these cruelties are visited with the punishment deserved. A Poor Law Board of Guardians is beyond the law." Again he says, "Personal responsibility is the very essence of administrative success. We use it in every department of the State, but we eschew it in the Poor Law, and the failure

* *Vide* "London Pauperism amongst Jews and Christians." By J. H. Stallard, M.B. Lond. Saunders, Otley, & Co.

is complete." Dr. Stallard recommends a uniform metropolitan rating and the establishment of a small representative Central Board, presided over by an Inspector of the Poor Law Board as the lieutenant of the Poor Law Minister. The number of this Board to be limited in order to fix individual responsibility upon its members, to make it strong in administrative power, and to give it efficient control over all the local authorities, paid or otherwise.

Now this Central Board corresponds to the Central Office before proposed, but the latter has the advantage of associating under one government the audit of charity accounts and the distribution of benevolent help through its machinery of district officers, who would, as before said, take the place of the relieving officers. The only action of the scheme on the independent charities of London, would be their acceptance of appeals for aid solely through the district officers, and the annual submission of their accounts and reports to the Central Office. To these regulations no honest institution could object, for the system of receiving applications only through the district officers would save their resources from the plunder of the professional beggar and impostor, and the audit of their accounts would only strengthen their claim to support before the public.

Dr. Stallard very properly would not abolish the Boards of Guardians; he recommends that they should be elected, and meet from week to week as they do now, in order to co-operate with the other machinery, to manage the local institutions for the poor, and to represent the wants and conditions of their poor to the Central Board of Control.

The part of Dr. Stallard's scheme which appears unnecessarily expensive and cumbrous is his notion that the districts should each be placed under the control of a Poor Law magistrate, who should occupy the same relation to poverty as the stipendiary magistrate does to crime. Now this, in view of the existence of a powerful but compact Central Office of action and appeal would appear superfluous, and if the districts were as proposed, about 180 in number, such expensive institutions as charity magistrates would be impossible; ten or twelve such courts would cost as much as the whole 180 district offices.

The remedies suggested, therefore, consist in :—

1st. A modification of the Poor Law administration, which—

- (a) Increases the comfort and well-being of the sick and aged.
- (b) Compels the truly able-bodied to pay, by their labour, fully for the cost of their public maintenance.
- (c) Educates and trains the young dependent for virtue and industry.
- (d) Leads to great saving of expense, by abolishing the office of Relieving Officer, and by preventing the waste of funds on impostors.

- (e) Leads to an equalization of the poor-rates, by equalizing the method and the expense of dealing with paupers.
- 2nd. An organization in the administration of charities, which by employing voluntary aid of an elevated and refined character in conjunction with a methodical system of personal and home inquiry and registration, makes the relief of the real sufferer prompt and complete, while it instantly detects and deters the impostor.
 - 3rd. Improved dwellings for the working classes, at a rental practicable to the resources of the humble workman.
 - 4th. An economical application of house refuse, with a view to diminishing the cost of food and of multiplying employments for the unemployed.
 - 5th. Increased restrictions in the licensing of public-houses and beer shops.

CONCLUSION.

The questions brought before the meeting are of such exceptional urgency and seriousness, that on such an occasion it may be excusable to say a few earnest words in conclusion.

When a plague visits us, and our poor—cold and cramped by the pestilence—are dying around us as if smitten by a destroying angel, we all rush to our posts of duty; we bring not only money but personal visitations to houses and hospitals; we put our own affairs in order, and we think whether we have done all we could: the calamity passes by, and we relapse into indifference as if all were safe. But if we realized the facts that lie within the immediate reach of all, we should find that a plague is constantly raging in our midst, more terrible because more extensive than the other, more dangerous because overlooked in forms of poverty that from familiarity with them we come to view as inevitable—a deadly plague that is bringing—God only knows—how much human suffering and eternal loss—that is costing the country how many millions, of which we have learned to-day an approximation!

Surely if we took these sad realities of life to heart, we could not contentedly leave their cure to remedies that manifestly fail, and that unintentionally are found to increase the disease,—certainly we should come forward, and with one voice demand that the administration of our charities, whether private or official, shall be brought to bear so that imposition and dishonesty may be prevented on the one hand, and that every real sufferer shall be relieved effectually on the other; while at the same time the deep causes that determine the existence of the plague, such as the want of moral and industrial training of our children, the bad physical surroundings, and the facilities for drunkenness of adults, which prevent the introduction of moral and religious light,—shall be dealt with on a scale commensurate with their importance and immensity.

Until we do this we are and must be—*the criminals of criminals*. When we think of the suspended murderer, let us ask ourselves whether we took any pains to educate and train him for virtue and usefulness,—and if we have not, let us bow our heads and be silent in the overwhelming sense of our responsibility. Or when we view the sad state of the poor—their over-crowded and filthy dwellings, the foul air, the bad and adulterated food, the disproportion between the present expenses of living to the wages that such darkened minds and feeble bodies can earn, let us again be mute—and, grateful that our own state is better, let us remove these stumbling blocks in the way of health and virtuous industry. Before we venture to judge these people, let us rather ask ourselves how much more are we to blame than they.

“Art is long, and life is fleeting.”

This subject is longer than art, both in the abstract and personally in the way of responsibility—for it reaches from earth down to the deepest depths of human depravity and suffering—upwards, it ascends to the mercyseat of Heaven. In all its dimensions it is vast and oppressive—minatory of danger to those who sleep or play beneath its shadow—capable of helping those on their way who with faithful hearts and willing hands will scale its difficult and rugged ascent.

The fleeting time reminds us that if we would be wise we must not lose our opportunity in useless contention about unessential things—nor dare we in so sacred a cause allow selfish motives to influence us. The time is fast coming to each of us when our art acquirements and our intellectual developments will be as nothing compared to the one engrossing thought of how we have fulfilled our social duties—and the words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me,” will bring more joy and triumph than any earthly riches or honour.





